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ABSTRACT

The National Adult Basic Education (ABE) Development Consortium developed a set of staff development principles and techniques from staff training literature and surveyed professional ABE staff developers regarding their appropriateness. Of 65 surveys distributed at a Florida conference and mailed to other interested practitioners, 35 were returned (54 percent). Of the 70 principles identified, 17 were ranked at an average of 2.7 or above on a 0-3 scale of appropriateness. Highly ranked general principles stress the importance of a positive climate for professional development, including both physical and psychological comfort. Participants are valued for their experience and professionalism, and activities relate to an individual's conceptual framework. Staff development activities are more likely to be successful, according to the rating scale, when the participants choose their involvement and when training is linked to an individual professional development plan. Evaluation is an integral component of ABE staff development and influences future planning and implementation of staff development activities. Other successful activities also take into account participant needs; effectiveness also results when new practices are clearly and explicitly presented by credible staff developers. Of the 39 techniques identified, five were ranked 2.7 or above. Techniques ranked highly stressed time and practice and nonjudgmental feedback, reinforced the perception of adult educators as facilitators versus teachers, were closely related to curriculum development, and involved well-organized, competent ABE staff developers. A staff development assessment guide will be prepared using the findings of this study. (Lists, with study rankings, of 24 general principles of staff development, 17 principles for planning staff development, 29 principles for staff development implementation, and 39 ABE staff development techniques are provided. Also included are a chart of components of effective inservice training and a list of 19 references.) (KC)

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PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE ABE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

THE NATIONAL ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
STAFF DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM

FEBRUARY, 1987

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The National ABE Staff Development Consortium began as a discussion among a few ABE staff development professionals at a conference in California in early 1985. We found that a number of us felt isolated in our research and training activities.

There should be a way to bring together the dozens of staff developers who specialize in the education of Adult Basic and Secondary administrators and instructors. Our first attempt was a session at the AAACE National Conference in Milwaukee, October, 1985. The session focused on recent research and practice of staff development, and was well received by participants.

In the spring of 1986 a steering group was formed, consisting of:

- Judy Crocker, University of Utah
- Ed Jones, George Mason University, Virginia
- Patty Keeton, Project MAPP, Maryland
- Jean Lowe, Fairfax County ABE, Virginia
- James Parker, U.S. Department of Education
- Marc Potish, Connecticut Staff Development Center
- Bill Sperling, Washington State Staff Development Center
- Hank Spille, Center for Adult Learning, ACE
- Doug Whitney, GED Test Service

The next steps were to develop a set of staff development principles and techniques and invite as many professional ABE staff developers as possible to dialog with us at two sessions during the Hollywood, Florida AAACE Conference. A survey instrument was developed to solicit responses regarding the appropriateness of the principles and techniques derived from recent staff training literature (see Appendices). Of the 65 surveys distributed at the AAACE Conference and mailed to other interested practitioners, 35 were returned (54%).

The NABE Staff Development Consortium now numbers **82 members**:

- 33 states are represented,
- Nine states are in the Northeast, 7 in the south, 10 in the Midwest, and 7 in the Far West,
- 45 members are male, 37 are female
- 56 (68%) have national, state, or regional staff development responsibilities,
- 26 (32%) are locally based.

Highest Ranked Principles

Of the **70** principles identified, **17** were ranked at an average of **2.7** or more on this scale:

Very Appropriate For ABE			Not Appropriate	No Opinion
3	2	1	0	N

Highly ranked general principles stress the importance of a positive climate for professional development, including both physical and psychological comfort. Participants are valued for their experience and professionalism, and activities relate to individual's conceptual framework.

Staff development activities are more likely to be sussessful when the participants choose their involvement and when training is linked to an individual professional development plan.

While staff development is seen as an on-going process, activities focus on goals that are meaningful and attainable, given the limitations of ABE programs.

Evaluation is an integral component of ABE staff development, providing feedback on effectiveness, employing a variety of techniques, and influencing future planning and implementation of staff development activities.

In planning the staff development program, participant and program needs are assessed. Also, participants must know what will be expected of them during the activities, what they will be able to do when the experience is over, and how they will be evaluated.

During the training, new practices are clearly and explicitly presented by credible staff developers. Then opportunities are provided for colleagues to discuss the application of practices in their ABE programs.

Of the **39 Techniques** identified, **5** were ranked **2.7** or above:

1. For teaching practices that require complex thinking skills, more time and practice should be provided.

2. Nonjudgmental feedback, support and technical assistance are critical when training staff to practice new approaches.

3. Training should reinforce the perception of adult educators as "facilitators" (vs. "teachers").

4. ABE curriculum development, improvement of instruction, and inservice education should be closely related.

5. A competent ABE staff developer is well organized, knows and adheres to the topic, facilitates questions, provides opportunity for practice, demonstrates ideas, strategies, and materials, and, among other things, "walks on water."

Other Interesting Rankings

Of those principles and techniques ranked below 2.7, 15 are especially interesting because of disagreement among respondents and for other reasons:

1. "Staff development builds on teacher strengths. The most competent and enthusiastic teachers are encouraged to be involved."
   While 18 respondents rated this item "very appropriate", six believe it is of little or no importance for ABE. Overall rating is 2.3.

2. "The school principal or program director is involved in inservice programs."
   Five respondents question the appropriateness of directors' involvement, though the average response is supportive (2.4).

3. "Staff development programs are closely related to State or local priorities and program needs."
   This principle is questioned by seven people, while 15 view this as very appropriate. Overall, the rating is only 2.2.

4. "Trainees learning a new teaching strategy need 15 to 20 demonstrations over the course of the training sequence and a dozen or more opportunities to practice the skill."
   There is considerable disagreement on this principle. Ten see it as very appropriate; another ten believe it has little or no appropriateness for ABE. Perhaps the latter ten think it's just undoable, given ABE program constraints.

5. "Assessments are made of participants' learning styles and habits."
   While all but three respondants believe this item is at least somewhat appropriate, the average is only 2.3.

6. "All segments of those involved in the program are involved in the planning including teachers, administrators, counselors, para-professionals, and volunteers."
   A large number of respondents (19) rate this principle as very appropriate, yet five rate it "one" or "zero". Overall rating is 2.4.

7. "New ideas are related to student achievement and teachers have the opportunity to document student achievement in relation to the new ideas."
A rating of 2.1 probably reflects the lack of documentation and accountability in ABE programs. However, 13 people did rate this a "3".

8. "Staff development sessions are held in comfortable surroundings, preferably away from school sites that permit interruptions or entice staff back to their routine tasks."
While the overall rating is certainly supportive (2.4), it is surprizing that five respondents see this principle as of little or no appropriateness for ABE programs.

9. "When activities require personal contact, informality and an exchange of ideas, 7 to 10 participants are optional."
This principle, as stated, makes no sense. "Optional" should read "optimal." Most respondents caught this typo, four gave no opinion. It happens.

10. "Training content has been verified by research to improve student achievement."
Perhaps the most curious item response of all. Without research, this study would not exist. Yet six people rate it a "one", and three more have "no opinion." Overall rating: 2.1.

11. "Teachers are provided materials to read and study on their own. These materials include both theory and practice."
Fifteen respondents rate this very appropriate, five gave it a "one". Perhaps the low responses reflect a lack of staff development materials for self-study.

12. "The instructor is able to model what it is proposed that recipients do in their work settings."
Six people rate this "one" or "zero", seventeen see modeling as very appropriate. Perhaps the word "model" is understood differently by respondents.

13. "When participants leave training activities there is a plan or set of instructional materials ready for immediate use."
Again, 17 rate this a "3", but the average rating is 2.4. Many staff development programs do not provide, or require the development of these support materials, it seems.

14. "Learning contracts can be used to individualize staff development."
A rating of only 2.1 idicates that much work is still required if contract techniques are to have an impact on ABE staff development.

15. "Lower teachers' perception of the cost of adopting a new practice through detailed discussion of the 'nuts and bolts' of using the technique and teacher sharing of experiences with the technique." While only one respondent sees this technique as not appropriate, six others rate it as "one". Admittedly, the wording is awkward, so the 2.2 rating may not reflect the potential worth of this principle.

Next Steps

James Parker of the Division of Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, is preparing an ABE Staff Development Self Assessment Guide for use by local and state projects to measure their training methods. Consortium members will be asked for input as the Guide is written. It will be available in April, 1987.

Consortium members will conduct sessions on principles and techniques at the ABE Commission Conference in Omaha, and at the American Adult and Continuing Education Conference in Washington, D.C., October, 1987. If you wish to attend either conference session, or would like to be a member of the National Consortium, contact:

James Parker
26-B Ridge Road
Greenbelt, MD 20770
(202) 732-2399

Membership is open to all staff development professionals who specialize in the training of adult basic and secondary education practitioners.

Please feel free to use these principles and techniques for your own staff development planning and activities, for further research, etc. Let us know about your experiences.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

1. For effective staff development to occur, a human climate of openness, acceptance, and trust must be established. 2.9

2. The importance of a positive climate for professional development includes a comfortable physical environment, and the building of a "spirit" among staff. 2.7

3. Staff development planners are aware of Havighurst's "teachable moment", and provide activities which will be available at those times for individual staff. 2.1

4. An essential prerequisite for a successful inservice education program is that staff development participants are treated as professionals and mature adults who want to continue to expand their skills and competence. 2.9

5. The experience base of adults is taken into account when planning inservice programs. Activities are planned which relate to each individual's conceptual framework and accomodate and build upon the past experience of all participants. 2.7

6. Staff development builds on teacher strengths. The most competent and enthusiastic teachers are encouraged to be involved. 2.3

7. When a participant chooses to become involved in an activity, there is a far greater likelihood that the experience will be meaningful. 2.8

8. The implementation of meaningful and quality professional development activities involves considering the situation, skills and experience of current staff. 2.6

9. Participants are involved on a number of different levels including diagnosing, implementing and evaluating their own learning experiences. 2.6

10. Staff development policies that provide for specific ABE staff development include reimbursement of expenses, release time for staff development and other targeted policies. 2.4

11. The school principal or program director is involved in inservice programs. 2.4

12. District level support is visible. 2.6

13. Effective staff development requires budgetary and moral support from administrators and community members who care enough to involve themselves in the process. 2.6

14. Staff development activities that are linked to a professional development plan or a general effort of the school or organization are more effective than a series of one-shot approaches on a variety of topics. 2.7

15. An administrative structure that allows for program and budget flexibility to plan, develop and fund specific ABE staff development activities contributes to a successful staff development program. 2.5

16. Staff development programs are closely related to State or local priorities and program needs. 2.2

17. An awareness and articulation of the beliefs and values about the purposes of staff development will provide order and purpose to ABE staff development activities. 2.5

18. Staff development is an "on-going" process that encourages growth of continuing staff and encourages new staff to become an integral part of the system and program development. 2.9

19. Staff development focuses on goals which are both meaningful and attainable, given the constrains which are present in the teaching/learning environment. 2.7

20. When the goal of the staff development program or activity involves organizational change, staff development leaders are familiar with the basic practices of organization development. 2.4

21. New practices are likely to be abandoned unless teachers have evidence of positive effects. 2.6

22. Evaluation is an integral component of staff development. 2.7

23. Evaluation provides continuous feedback on staff development effectiveness, employs a variety of techniques, and influences future planning and implementation of staff development activities. 2.7

24. Trainees learning a new teaching strategy need 15 to 20 demonstrations over the course of the training sequence and a dozen or more opportunities to practice the skill. 1.9

PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING STAFF DEVELOPMENT

1. An early step in staff development is an assessment of teacher needs in relation to those of their students. 2.7
2. Planners consider the individual's level of experience in their present assignment. 2.5
3. Effective professional development activities are based on a continuous assessment of participants' needs - as needs change, the activities are adjusted accordingly. 2.8
4. Perceived training needs of teachers and needs of the program are assessed. 2.7
5. Assessments are made of participants' learning styles and habits. 2.3
6. Teachers are involved in the planning of staff development activities and share in the responsibilities. 2.5
7. Activities that view each participant as a resource are more responsive to participants' needs. 2.6
8. All segments of those involved in the program are involved in the planning including teachers, administrators, counselors, para-professionals, and volunteers. 2.4
9. Collaborative inservice program planning and implementation is increasingly important as States develop more comprehensive approaches to teacher training and staff development. 2.5
10. Programs led by teachers, school supervisors, and college staff are more effective than those led by outside consultants, school district staff, or State department of education staff. 1.5
11. Expectations are stated at the outset and througout the process. Otherwise, participants are likely to assume that activities are designed for purposes other than intended. 2.6
12. New ideas are related to student achievement and teachers have the opportunity to document student achievement in relation to the new ideas. 2.1
13. Participants go to a staff development session knowing the basic goals of the activity. Awareness and readiness create an environment where the exchange of ideas can take place. 2.6
14. Inservice programs are planned to accomodate both short and long range staff needs. 2.6

15. Professional development activities which take place at the end of a work day have less chance of being successful than those offered when participants are fresh. Further, they are less likely to be successful when they are scheduled at times of the year when seasonal activities, conferences, etc. occur. 2.1

16. Teachers are permitted to participate in staff development activities on "prime time" as part of their professional assignment. 2.5

17. Staff development sessions are held in comfortable surroundings, preferably away from school sites that permit interruptions or entice staff back to their routine tasks. 2.4

PRINCIPLES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION

1. Participants in professional development activities know; a) what will be expected of them during the activities; b) what they will be able to do when the experience is over; c) how they will be evaluated. 2.7

2. The activity provides positive incentives to recipients for their participation, both during the activity and during its implementation. 2.6

3. Adult learning is focused upon present life activities rather than upon preparation for future roles, which means that individuals are seeking immediate application of learning to their present problems or circumstances. 2.3

4. A staff development program that provides different educational experiences for participants at different stages of development is more likely to achieve its objectives than one in which all participants engage in common activities. 2.5

5. The activity provides sufficient time for recipients to learn, practice, master, and apply the content imparted. 2.6

6. Staff development takes spaced time, i.e. teachers need intervals in which to plan and try out new approaches and return to evaluate their successes and problems. Intensive "one-shot" schedules of an hour, day, or a week are likely to effect little change. 2.6

7. Time for experimentation is provided while teachers adapt new practices to meet the needs of their students. Personal, in-classroom assistance from administrators and fellow teachers is essential during this process. 2.5

8. The activity provides systemic and clinical support during the activity and during the period of implementation in the classroom. 2.5

9. During training sessions, opportunities are provided for small-group discussions of the application of new practices and sharing of ideas and concerns about effective instruction. 2.8

10. Activities permit variation in the ways that learners participate, and in ways that they use what they learn. 2.6

11. Alternative structures for delivering ABE staff development are provided. 2.6

12. When activities require personal contact, informality and an exchange of ideas, 7 to 10 participants are optimal. 2.3

13. Participants' concerns are listened to, and appropriate adjustment are made. 2.6

14. Various program patterns emphasizing teacher responsibility, such as self-instruction, peer study groups, college courses, and one-to-one consultation are used. 2.5

15. The instructional approaches which teachers use are determined by their experience of success or failure in the classroom. To improve educational practices, staff development provide concrete and specific methods, support as they are implemented, and opportunities for teachers to observe learning outcomes. 2.3

16. Teachers are allowed to express and resolve concerns about the effects of changes on them personally. 2.5

17. Training shows how new practices may be implemented without major disruption. 2.5

18. Training content has been verified by research to improve student achievement. 2:1

19. Teachers are willing to try new ideas when they are working in teams or have the support of a group of colleagues. 2.5

20. Giving teachers the opportunity to periodically meet and share ideas with colleagues is valuable in providing support and facilitating change. 2.9

21. Teachers are provided materials to read and study on their own. These materials include both theory and practice. 2.3

22. Teachers are given the opportunity to observe other teachers at work trying out the new ideas and to talk with them about what they observe. 2.6

23. Inservice education is translated into classroom use to create an immediate impact on teaching and learning. 2.5

24. Teachers are provided feedback in regard to student learning outcomes. 2.6

25. Teachers trained as staff developers are highly effective in working with other staff members to effect change. 2.6

26. New procedures are presented clearly and explicitly by a person perceived as credible by the group in training. 2.7

27. Professional development activities are more successful when the presenter is able to approach the subject from the participants' view. 2.6

28. The instructor is able to model what it is proposed that recipients do in their work settings. 2.3

29. When participants leave training activities there is a plan or set of instructional materials ready for immediate use. 2.4

ABE STAFF DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES

1. Student analyses of personal learning projects are completed in the past and during the course. 1.7

2. Learning contracts can be used to individualize staff development. 2.1

3. The Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) was developed by Guglielmino in 1977 and is the best known instrument of its kind. It is a self-report questionnaire pertaining to abilities and attitudes toward learning and personality characteristics. 1.7

4. Activities are collectively designed by program staff to meet general faculty development rather than individual needs. 1.6

5. Participants should begin with self-identified needs for professional improvement. 2.4

6. For adult educators to get involved in and profit from self-directed continuing education they need to: (a) accept responsibility for directing their own education; (b) better understand the process and procedures involved (e.g., identifying personal educational problems, locating resources, obtaining feedback on progress); and (c) receive administrative support and recognition for this kind of effort. Existing efforts to meet the first two needs commonly take the form of workshops and graduate school offerings. 2.5

7. The purpose of a formal professional development plan is to assure that individual growth is not diminished by indecision or lack of planning and prioritization. It is altogether expected that the need for modifications may develop while the plan is in progress. 2.6

8. Diagnosis of teacher strengths and weaknesses can help the trainer suggest changes that are likely to be successful--and, thus, reinforce future efforts to change. 2.3

9. Full-time State college and university staff are assigned to teacher centers when requested by LEAS. 1.3

10. Staff development can involve consortia of two or more educational agencies, cooperation of several school districts or several colleges in the same geographical area, and teaming of large school districts with one or more colleges. 2.3

11. Staff development leaders can be linked with a university or other professional development center. 2.3

12. Some districts have established staff development resource centers. A center serves as a place where staff can exchange ideas and methods about teaching, it provides a location where new materials can be displayed for an extended period of time, if offers teachers space where they can develop their own materials.2.5

13. Awareness activities are important to provide an overview of the possibilities. 2.5

14. Trainers facilitate role playing of commonly encountered problems. 2.4

15. For teaching practices that require very complex thinking skills, plan to take more time, provide more practice, and consider activities that develop conceptual flexibility. 2.7

16. Accessibility of supporting materials, appearance of the facility, room temperature, lighting, auditory and visual quality within the room, and many other physical factors have subtle but sometimes profound effects on the success of the professional development activity. 2.5

17. Educators working to expand opportunities for lifelong learning on the job have found that coaching is one powerful approach to continuing growth. Inservice programs, conferences, and college based courses are necessary and valuable as well. However, the oncall assistance of colleagues at the work site can provide the support, the resources, and the ongoing feedback required to actually implement new practices teachers learn in traditional settings. 2.5

18. Develop in teachers a philosophical acceptance of new practices by presenting research and a rationale for the effectiveness of the techniques. Allow teachers to express doubts about or objections to the recommended methods in the small group. Let the other teachers convince the resisting teacher of the usefulness of the practices through "testimonies" of their use and effectiveness. 2.4

19. Use video tapes to help teachers assess their classroom skills. It encourages teachers to observe their own teaching and to initiate a personal plan for improvement. 2.3

20. Nonjudgmental feedback and reciprocity, teachers find, are valuable aspects of the practice of coaching. Nonjudgmental feedback is supportive, they say, and helps reduce risks attendant to trying new methods. After all, it was pointed out. "You can't expect a new approach to work perfectly the first time. But support and technical assistance while you're trying can help, evaluation does not." 2.7

21. Reinforce the perception of adult educators as "facilitators" rather than "teachers". 2.7

22. Guskey proposes a model based on the idea that the instructional approaches which teachers use are determined by their experience of success or failure in the classroom. This model suggests that the best way to improve educational practices is to present teachers with concrete and specific methods, provide support as the methods are implemented, and enable them to observe learning outcomes. Continued commitment to the new practices will be generated if the outcomes are positive. 2.5

23. Participants should seek feedback on their projects from students, colleagues and supervisors. 2.4

24. Include demonstration of exemplary practices, and provide participants with opportunities to learn skills by observing others. 2.6

25. Closely relate the activities of curriculum development, improvement of instruction, and inservice education. 2.7

26. Help teachers grow in their self-confidence and competence through encouraging them to try only one or two new practices after each workshop. 2.3

27. Lower teachers' perception of the cost of adopting a new practice through detailed discussion of the "nuts and bolts" of using the technique and teacher sharing of experiences with the technique. 2.2

28. Self-instructional modules are designed to meet individual teacher's needs. The modular system includes varied learning opportunities. 1.9

29. Small groups are useful for guided study. This method appeals to adult learners. 2.4

30. The success of a peer review process is largely due to an atmosphere that is created over several years in which instructional growth was expected and encouraged. 2.4

31. A model of effective teaching should be presented so that teachers have a common language to describe instruction as they observe each other and interact about teaching. 2.3

32. Use an inservice continuum to meet teacher's needs. Each of the six stages is designed for a particular level of expertise:

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Attending	Awareness	Interest	Commitment	Skill Development

Stage 6 2.5

Implementation

33. Research-based problem-solving strategies appear to be more effective than inservice programs based on unsupported ideas of what might work. 2.4

34. Between workshops, encourage teachers to visit each others' classrooms, preferaby with a simple, objective, student-centered observation instrument. Provide opportunities for discussion of the observation. 2.4

35. Newsletters can be an excellent way of institutionalizing staff development programs. Not only do the newsletters provide information about upcoming inservice events, they also remind readers that professional growth is an integral aspect of school life. 2.5

36. Participants need a supportive, experienced adult educator in their classroom when they are trying things out. 1.7

37. Individual consultation with trainers should be available on teacher request. 2.4

38. A competent staff developer:

- Is knowledgeable about the topic.
- Has clear objectives in mind.
- Is well organized.
- Keeps on schedule
- Explains procedures and gives directions for all activities.
- Adheres to the topic.
- Uses audio-visual materials skillfully.
- Allows time for questions.
- Provides opportunity for practice.
- Uses active involvement techniques.
- Avoids straight lecture method.
- Maintains balance between group participation and presentation of information.
- Demonstrates ideas and strategies with classroom examples.
- Demonstrates materials that have immediate use in classroom. 2.7

39. Components of Effective Inservice Training (attached): 2.6

from: Staff Development Leadership Teams: A Training Manual, Ohio Dept. of Education, 1983

Appendix B: Components of Effective Inservice Training

COMPONENT	WHAT IT DOES	HOW TO DO IT	WHAT GOOD IS IT?	COMMENTS
THEORY	Provides rationale and description of the skill or technique, including potential uses.	Readings, lectures, films, discussions.	Raises awareness; increases conceptual control of a subject.	When used alone, theory rarely results in skill acquisition or transfer of skills into the classroom.
MODELING OR DEMONSTRATION	Enacts the teaching strategy or skill.	Live demonstration with adults; films, television, or other media.	Has considerable effect on awareness; some effect on knowledge; increases mastery of theory.	Modeling alone is unlikely to result in the acquisition or transfer of skills unless accompanied by other components.
PRACTICE	Gives experience with a new skill or strategy.	Simulation of the event with peers or small groups	Once awareness and knowledge have been achieved, practice is an effective way of acquiring skills and strategies.	Practice is an extremely effective way to develop competence in a wide variety of classroom techniques.
FEEDBACK	Offers a system for observing teaching behavior and provides the opportunity to reflect on teaching.	Can be self-administered; provided by peers, observers, coaches, on a regular or occasional basis.	Results in greater awareness of one's teaching behavior and knowledge about alternatives.	Changes in behavior will persist as long as feedback continues; then behaviors gradually return to the original point.
COACHING	Supplies support, technical assistance, and commitment to the teacher.	Use other teachers, supervisors, professors, curriculum consultants as coaches.	Helps teachers to analyze content and approach and make plans to help students adapt.	This element is especially necessary in the mastery of new approaches or skills; it encourages implementation.

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